

School Zone Frequently Asked Questions & Safety Tips

Driving in the School Zone

Slow down-you're free to drive even slower than 20 m.p.h. and should when conditions warrant it such as times of poor visibility due to heavy rain, blowing snow, icy roads, fog, or darkness; or when there is heavy traffic or lots of activity on the road side such as groups of kids or parked cars letting off passengers.

Use caution.

- Avoid making u-turns within the school zone markings.
- Don't turn around in the neighboring resident's driveways.

It's hard enough to see children, and even harder when you're making U-turns or backing up.

At the Crosswalk

The safety patrol members guarding the crosswalk are there to direct the students, not the traffic. It is a driver's responsibility to stop to allow pedestrians to cross in a crosswalk.

- Please stop well before the crosswalk and stay stopped until the crosswalk is no longer occupied, not just until your lane is clear.
- Do not turn left or right through an occupied crosswalk.
- Do not overtake or pass a car that is stopped in front of a crosswalk, even if it is signaling that it is turning right.
- When you're turning, don't wait inside the crosswalk.

Children on Wheels

If your children ride a bike, scooter or skateboard to school remind them that they must walk the bike or scooter or carry the skateboard across the crosswalk. If they roller skate or rollerblade to school, they must remove the skate or blades and walk across the crosswalk, as well.

Stopping Within a School Zone

Never stop or park your car in the crosswalk or within 20 feet of the crosswalk. Students and other pedestrians rely on the crosswalk and need the visibility that the 20-foot buffer provides to cross safely.

- If you park on the side of the road, always have your child exit the car on the side away from traffic.
- Don't park so that your child dashes across the street to get to the school.
- Always have your child use the designated crosswalk.
- Remind your child to follow the safety patrol's instructions.

Stuck Behind a School Bus?

It always seems to happen when we're in a hurry, but remember you must come to a full stop when the bus is loading or unloading children. This applies whether you are behind the bus or approaching it from the opposite direction.

The bus driver activates a warning signal, usually flashing lights and a "stop" sign, to let you know when you must stop. The warning stays active until all the children are either safely loaded on the bus or have safely crossed the street.

It is important that you stay stopped until the school bus starts moving again.

School Rules

All school zones are unique. Sometimes schools develop additional policies specific to their concerns. For the children's safety, some schools develop traffic flow patterns, limit drop off and pick up sites, or develop other procedures. For these rules to work to protect the children everyone must follow the rules every time.

Make sure anyone else who picks up or drops off your child is aware of the school's policies. Share this flyer with them as well as any other school policy notices.

Children Are Not Adults

Young children see and hear differently than adults:

- Children have only two-thirds of the peripheral vision that adults have and they have difficulty determining the source of a sound. They are still learning to judge distances and speeds. When a car is coming towards them, they cannot judge accurately how fast it is traveling or how long it will take to cover the distance.
- Children focus on one thing at a time. If they are playing with friends or riding bikes it is unlikely that they are aware of your car.
- Children are spontaneous and have trouble stopping an action once started.
- Children also tend to overestimate their abilities, thinking that they can run across a street before the flashing light changes or a car approaches.